



Branching Out

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Spring 2017

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April Showers Bring...Sexual Assault Awareness

By Samantha Sustachek



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Sexual Assault Services (SAS) is gearing up to help the community recognize this issue during the third annual Seeds of Change luncheon. As always, this event is held in partnership with our sister program, Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN), because April is also Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year's event will be held on Wednesday, April 19th, from 11:30 to 1:00 at Infusino's Banquet Hall (3201 Rapids Dr.) and will feature Nila Grahl, director of the Racine County Child Advocacy Center, as the main speaker. In addition, SAS's 8th annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month awards will be presented – one to an exemplary SAS volunteer and one to a community professional who has demonstrated compassion and dedication in his/her work with sexual assault survivors. SCAN's 3rd annual Child Abuse Prevention

Month award will be presented to a valued friend of the SCAN program. Aside from the speaker and award presentations, the luncheon will also feature a survivor art display, as well as artwork produced by children who participated in the SCAN program in their classrooms. SAS and SCAN encourage any interested community members to attend the luncheon to learn more about the programs and show their support for survivors in our Racine community. Many of you have already purchased tickets, and we thank you! *If you have not yet reserved your tickets (\$25 each) please call (262) 619-1634 right away. Tickets must be reserved by no later than noon on Monday, April 17th, and will not be available at the door, although we can take payment at the door for tickets reserved in advance.*

On another note, SAS and SCAN want to be sure our community partners are aware of our new location. For over 15 years, our programs operated out of office space at 1220 Mound Avenue, the former Western Publishing building. During the last week of December, we relocated to office space on the fourth floor of 2000 Domanik Drive, the former home of Lincoln Lutheran. We will not be having a formal

open house, but we welcome you to stop in for a visit Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or Fridays before noon. Come see our new space! If you just need to reach us by phone, our phone numbers are unchanged. SCAN can be reached at (262) 619-1633, SAS at (262) 619-1634, and SAS's 24-hour crisis line at (262) 637-7233.



—Samantha

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Legislative Update

By Vicki Biehn

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) and End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (EDAW) held their biannual Legislative Advocacy Day on March 21, 2017, at the Wisconsin state capitol building. This is a day when advocates, survivors, and other concerned citizens can meet with their representatives to discuss concerns about the budget and other legislation that may arise during the upcoming legislative session. This year one SAS staff person and one sexual assault survivor attended Legislative Advocacy Day and met with two state senators and three state representatives.

During meetings with our state representatives, we discussed several issues related to the upcoming legislative session. First, we shared with the legislators the need to increase the Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) funding. This is the only state funding that local sexual assault services providers (SASPs) receive to provide basic core services to survivors, as well as primary prevention education in the community. The current annual funding level is \$2.1 million for 44 agencies across the state, with five counties not receiving any funding at all. In Governor Walker's proposed budget, SAVS funding was flat funded, meaning no cuts, but no increases to this funding either.

We presented the facts to the state representatives that victim services and prevention education are woefully underfunded in our state. We demonstrated a great need to increase this funding by using a population-based staffing model for state funding of sexual assault prevention and victim services. According to this model only two counties in Wisconsin are funded at a level necessary to provide these services to their communities. Racine County's population is about 195,163, and based on the model, would need to have 2.5 FTEs in order to serve this population. Unfortunately, Racine County is only funded at a 1.25 FTE level.

We also encouraged the representatives to support upcoming legislation related to teen dating violence prevention. The teen dating violence bill has not yet been introduced, but plans for this bill would require schools to teach curricula based on healthy relationship education, provide training for staff on teen dating violence, and put victim sensitive response policies in place. Currently, 22 other states have this type of legislation.

In addition, we urged our representatives to support the Sexually Exploited Children Protection Act, which would protect child victims of sex trafficking from criminal prostitution charges. Most of these victims have a prior history of abuse long before pimps and johns abuse them. Thus, these children should be treated as severely traumatized and abused individuals requiring specialized services and counseling. The current approach, which treats these children as delinquents or criminals, hinders efforts to prosecute pimps and johns and is harmful to the child victims. It creates distrust and other barriers to cooperation with law enforcement and child protective services. The isolation of detention and the stigma of being treated as a delinquent also exacerbate these children's feelings of guilt and shame. This act would also help bring state law in line with the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which treats prostituted minors, not as delinquents, but as victims of sexual exploitation.

Another issue we discussed with legislators was the retention of funds in the budget to provide civil legal aid to low income victims of domestic and sexual violence. This funding is proposed in Gov. Walker's budget, and if passed, would increase Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants to the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc., by \$500k annually. This would provide more funding for programs that offer civil legal services to low-income families. Many victims who choose to leave their abusive partners immediately become enmeshed in the criminal and civil legal systems. In particular, family law continues to be a very difficult arena for victims, because they do not have the means to afford the high cost of attorneys to help them navigate the lengthy legal process. Access to affordable legal representation can mean the difference between victims keeping or losing their children.

We encouraged legislators to oppose LRB-1205/1, which is currently circulating for co-sponsorship, and would prohibit a city, village, town, or county from enacting or enforcing an ordinance, resolution, or policy that prohibits the enforcement of a federal or state law relating to undocumented citizens or ascertaining whether an individual has satisfactory immigration status. This legislation would prohibit local units of government from adopting policies that make it more likely that immigrant victims will reach out to law enforcement for help. Basically, it prevents the creation of so-called "Sanctuary Cities." When immigrant victims and their children are in the perilous position of choosing between reporting a crime and the possibility of deportation, not only are they less safe, but the entire community is in more danger. When victims are relegated to the shadows of our communities, violent and abusive individuals are not held accountable and are allowed to remain at large.

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Rompiendo la Barrera

Breaking the Barrier

By Annabell Bustillos



Meet Michelle!

Have you heard the term Latinx? Until recently I had not, so I decided to do some research about Latinx and share it in this issue. From what I could find, Latinx originated on the internet around 2004 but gained popularity around 2014. It is being seen more and more nowadays.

According to Kat Lazo, a Youtube personality who I talked about in the last issue, and Complex.com, there are two main reasons why Latinx is being used. One is to dismantle the patriarchy. The Spanish language is gendered; many words are either male or female and the male term is used as the universal term for everyone. For example, the word for friends in Spanish is either amigas, if you are with a group of female friends, or amigos if you are in a group of male friends. But what if you are in a group with both male and female friends? Well, the second one male person enters the group, the masculine form of the word (amigos) is used. The “x” in Latinx is being used in an effort to push against the masculine term that dictates the Spanish language.

Using terms like policeman or mankind can subconsciously tell women and young girls that they aren’t included. This can limit the possibilities that they create for themselves or even suggest that they are inferior. Replacing Latino with Latinx is similar to the effort to use more inclusive terms like police officer instead of policeman. For a while “Latin@” became a way to represent both the male and female population, but Latin@ does not work for those individuals who do not identify as Latina or Latino. This brings us to the second reason to use Latinx.

The second reason to use Latinx is to break down the gender binary. Historically, we’ve acknowledged two genders: male and female. But what if you don’t fit in either or you fit into both? For individuals who don’t fit into either the Latina or Latino groups, Latinx is a word that those individuals may feel more comfortable using.

Latinx, may not be for everyone, but it is a way to be more inclusive. Latinx is not replacing Latina and Latino. If someone wants to identify as Latino or Latina they can continue to do so. Being more gender inclusive does not mean that we erase other identities. It simply brings more inclusivity to a gendered language like Spanish.

—Annabell

Hello, my name is Michelle Englund and I am the new member of the SAS family. I recently filled the Volunteer and Community Awareness Specialist position. The main goal of my position is to recruit and train volunteers along with working in the community to promote the services of SAS. I will reach out to the community by way of churches, schools, and businesses, to promote and recruit volunteers for the organization along with planning events to honor our volunteers. In addition, I staff the crisis line and the hospital response team.

Volunteering has always been an important part of my life and I believe we should all give a little back to our community. I was part of the Work A Little Magic Team at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare for over five years, this gave me the opportunity to volunteer and help coordinate multiple events from Relay for Life, the School Supply Drive, and the Giving Tree. My love for volunteering came from the individuals I worked with in addition to the feeling of achievement working for a good cause; it was a turning point in my life. When volunteers work together the impossible can be accomplished. I am excited about the opportunity to work with the volunteers of SAS and to show my appreciation for all of the hard work they do throughout the year.

On a different note, I have my Bachelor’s degree in Healthcare Management with a minor in Human Resources from Concordia University and I am currently obtaining my Master’s degree in Human Services.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer please feel free to contact me at 262-619-1634 ext. 18 or by email at michelle.englund@lsswis.org.

—Michelle



Family Advocate

By Christa Dasher

Recently I was able to attend a workshop on The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. I would like to share with you some of the information that I learned. “The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is a national and international initiative that aims to develop and enhance five specific characteristics (called protective factors) that help keep families strong and children safe from abuse and neglect.” The Five Protective Factors consist of parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children. Each protective factor consists of everyday actions that can be done to help promote that protective factor. When all these protective factors are present, the results are strengthened families, optimal child development and a reduced likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

The first protective factor, parental resilience, is “the ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened by and even transformed by those experiences. Everyday actions we can do to help strengthen parental resilience include:

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued.
- Honor each family’s race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting.
- Encourage parents to manage stress effectively.
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills.
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times.

The second protective factor is social connections. Social connections are important because they help to strengthen families and provide support. Without social connections parents become isolated and stress can increase, which may lead to child abuse and neglect. Everyday actions that we can do to help promote social connections include:

- Help families value, build, sustain, and use social connections.
- Create an inclusive environment.
- Facilitate mutual support around parenting and other issues.
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities.

The third protective factor is knowledge of parenting and child development. “Parents who have some knowledge of basic child development are likely to have more realistic expectations of their children.” Parents often use what they know and have learned from their own family members and their own upbringing. Parents should understand that parenting is “part natural and part learned”. They need to feel comfortable asking questions without feeling embarrassed or judged. Everyday actions that we can do to help support parents knowledge of parenting and child development include:

- Model developmentally appropriate interactions with children.
- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development.
- Encourage exploration of parenting issues or concerns.
- Provide opportunities to try out new parenting strategies.
- Address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective.

The forth protective factor is concrete support in times of need. “Concrete support in times of need, means that families have access to whatever they need to handle the challenges they face and to be successful.” Know that culture and beliefs may affect how comfortable people are in asking for help. Don’t force resources on families, instead listen to what they want and are willing to accept. Everyday actions that help provide concrete support in times of need include:

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis.
- Provide information and connections to other services in the community.
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports.

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SAS Program Statistics July—December 2016

Crisis Line Calls.....	60
Racine Hospital Visits.....	41
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	7
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	3
New Counseling Clients.....	27
Counseling Sessions.....	421
Support Group Sessions.....	32
Community Presentations.....	35
CAC Appointments.....	90



Seeking Safety

By Kari Wilder

I began college wanting to be a lawyer. I thought majoring in both criminology and psychology would give me a leg up. I ended up falling in love with my 8AM psychology courses and decided to pursue a master's degree in psychology instead. I never lost my interest in the criminal justice system and knew that somehow I wanted to combine my interests. While searching for a graduate level internship I stumbled across Benedict Center, located in Milwaukee, which works with women struggling with addiction who are incarcerated or on probation or parole.

During my internship I split my time between Benedict Center and the House of Corrections (HOC) in Franklin, WI. Prior to my internship, like many individuals I saw trauma and substance abuse as two separate things. Post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse were distinct illnesses that required distinct treatment but after only a few days of sitting in on groups and individual sessions I began to see how intertwined they really are. Day after day I saw women with charges or convictions for possession and when they spoke of their lives I heard horrendous stories of child physical and sexual abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence, and various other forms of trauma. I began to see that substance abuse wasn't the problem for many of these women but instead it was how they coped with the real issue, years and years of trauma which I later discovered is supported by data from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study.

According to the ACE study conducted between 1995 and 1997 there is a relationship between drug use and childhood trauma. The ACE study surveyed over 17,000 participants about physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, witnessing violence towards their mother, substance abuse in the household, mental illness in the household, parental divorce or separation, and incarceration of a member of the household. The survey consisted of ten questions, the total number of "yes" responses resulted in an ACE score of 1-10. This study found that as their ACE score increased so did their risk for alcohol and drug abuse along with many other illnesses and disorders. In other words the more traumas experienced by an individual as a child the more likely they were to use alcohol and drugs as an adult.

It was during my time at the HOC that I saw my first Seeking Safety group. Seeking Safety is an evidence-based, cognitive-

behavioral group designed by Lisa Najavitis, which focuses on post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. The curriculum can be used for groups of any size and can also be used in individual counseling sessions. It directly addresses both the trauma and addiction without requiring group members to focus on the details of their trauma. While at the HOC I was able to see how this group changed how group members viewed themselves. They began to see themselves not as an "addict" and but as a trauma survivor who was struggling to cope. The group provided them with alternatives for coping and helped them understand why they may have turned to alcohol and/or drugs.

When I began working at Sexual Assault Services I knew immediately that Seeking Safety was a support group I wanted to make available to survivors of sexual assault. We've successfully had one Seeking Safety group and I am looking forward to begin another in the near future.

—Kari



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Lastly, we encouraged our representatives to oppose legislation that would discriminate against transgender students (the bathroom bill). Studies find that transgender individuals who are prevented from using the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity are more likely to be physically and verbally harassed. These children's experiences are already often marked by bullying, physical and sexual violence, and the mental health impacts of abuse. These kinds of anti-transgender bills do not prevent sexual assault in any way. Instead, these efforts perpetuate intolerance and harmful myths about transgender students. In 17 other states, including our neighbors in Iowa and Minnesota, schools that have allowed transgender students to use sex-segregated facilities consistent with their gender identity have not seen increases in assaults or harassment in those spaces.

This article is a very general update, so if you would like more detailed information on this legislation or on the legislative process, please contact Vicki Biehn at 262-619-1634 or vbiehn@lsswis.org or Dominic Holt from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault at 608-257-1516 or dominich@wcasa.org.

--Vicki

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



Prevention Matters

April is nationally recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time for the community to come together to show support for children and families. While intervention policies and ways to stop incidents of child abuse and neglect are crucial, they are by definition reactive. Prevention starts 'upstream' from the problem to address values and beliefs that surround it.

Prevention can take many forms. It can be about educating adults to become nurturing, positive parents who can balance love and limits. It can be about teaching children to recognize abuse and disclose it. But it also is about influencing changes in our culture that perpetuate abusive behavior. The Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program of Lutheran Social Services is an agent of that change.

Prevention education needs to address myths about abuse that shroud it in secrecy. People hold many misconceptions about abuse. Among them:

- parents have the right to mistreat their children,
- parents who abuse kids don't love them
- kids deserve the abuse they get
- what happens at home should stay at home
- abuse only happens in poor families
- very few children experience abuse
- abuse usually happens at the hands of strangers
- sexual abuse can't happen to boys
- when a girl is sexually abused, she was asking for it

As a result of these misconceptions, children who experience abuse tend to feel shame and keep it a secret because they believe that they are the only person it is happening to, the abuse is somehow their fault, and that no one will believe them. This stigma allows the abuse to continue and prevents the child from getting the intervention needed to heal the physical, cognitive, and emotional scars.

Here are some simple, effective ways you can be involved in Child Abuse Prevention Month right here in our own community.

Participate in the 3rd Annual Turn The Town Blue 5K Family Fun Run/Walk. This event will be held on Saturday, 4/29/17 at 8:00am at Lincoln Park in Kenosha.
www.Kenoshaunitedway.org/turnthetownblue

Visit SCAN at the Milaeger's Great Lakes Farmers Market on Sunday, 4/23/17 to learn more about our mission.

Host a Casual for Kids Day at your workplace or school to raise financial support for local child abuse prevention programs, like SCAN.

Share, comment and like the Stop Child Abuse and Neglect-SCAN Facebook posts to increase community awareness.

Join SCAN for our annual Seeds of Change luncheon to celebrate April's Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The event will be held on Wednesday April 19 at 11:30am at Infusino's Banquet Hall. Call the SCAN office at 262-619-1633 for more information.

We all have a role to play in spreading encouraging messages as a means of dispelling the stigma surrounding abuse. We invite you to join us as we invest in great childhoods and a healthy community.

SCAN is funded by the United Way of Racine County and the United Way of Kenosha County as well as through private donations from local churches, schools, individuals foundations, and businesses.



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The fifth and final protective factor is children's social and emotional competence. This is the only protective factor that focuses on the child. "Zero to Three defines social-emotional competence as "the developing capacity to experience and regulate emotions, form secure relationships, and explore and learn – all in the context of the child's family, community and cultural background." Children who are socially and emotionally competent are more likely to be enjoyable and less stress to parent. As a result, these children are less likely to be subject to child abuse and neglect. Everyday actions that help promote children's social and emotional competence include:

- Help parents foster their child's social emotional development.
- Model nurturing support to children.
- Include children's social and emotional development activities into programming.
- Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society.
- Respond proactively when social and emotional development seems to need support.

—Christa

Adapted from Looking at Families Through a Different Lens: Bringing the Protective Factors Framework to Life in Your Work workshop materials Copyright 2012 National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds. For more information www.StrengtheningFamilies.net



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262-763-6226 Ext. 109

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)
Spanish Crisis Line: 262-424-3134
Website: <http://www.sasoflss.org>

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

Sexual Assault Services is funded by United Way of Racine County, Victims of Crime Act grant, Sexual Assault Victim Services grant, Violence Against Women Act grant, the Racine Dominican Mission Fund, the SC Johnson Fund, and the support of generous local donors.